

February 23, 2009

Wilkins vaults up leader board with strong second-round showing

Blue Raiders tied for 15th at Edwins Watts/Kiawah Island Intercollegiate

Athletic Communications

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. - Senior **Leigh Wilkins** made the most of moving day at the Edwin Watts/Kiawah Island Intercollegiate, where she fired a 1-over 73 to vault from 84th after the first round into a tie for 25th following second round action Monday.



Leigh Wilkins fired a 1-over 73 in Monday's second round at the Edwin Watts/Kiawah Island Intercollegiate. It tied for the second-lowest score of her career. (MT)

Wilkins is 9-over for the tournament and seven shots off the overall lead established by UCF's Elisa Aoki. Wilkins' play spearheaded a showing that enabled Middle Tennessee to remain within striking distance of several top-ranked teams ahead of it.

The Blue Raiders followed their 311 in the first round at Cougar Point with a respectable 24-over 312 at Oak Point during Tuesday's round, which wasn't all bad considering they were playing the course blind. Middle Tennessee is tied for 15th at 623 and five shots out of the Top 10.

"Going into today I thought if we could do about what we did yesterday that would be pretty good because we had not played the course before and the windy, cold conditions made it pretty tough," Blue Raider Head Coach Chris Adams said. "It can be tough sometimes when you haven't seen the course but they battled out there pretty good and now we are in striking distance."

Miami leads the tournament with a 29-over 605, followed by East Tennessee (606) and Central Arkansas (610).

In addition to Wilkins' strong play, newcomer **Hannah Weathersby** is tied for 39th with a 10-over 154 after slipping to 8-over in the second round. Freshman **Karisa Akin** is 11-over and tied for 51st. She bounced back with a 76 Monday after opening with a 79. **Clara Leathers** and **Mallory Bishop** are 17- and 21-over, respectively.

Wilkins' 73 featured three birdies and 11 pars as she delivered a steady performance in tough conditions. She was even on the front and kept it that way through 14. She fell to 1-over on the day with a bogey on the par-3 15 but came back with three straight pars to complete one of her best rounds as a Blue Raider.

"I was definitely proud of how Leigh played," Adams said. "She managed the course well and it is a course that favors Leigh. She took advantage with a good showing when we really needed it."

The Blue Raiders will return to Cougar Point for Tuesday's final round.

Edwin Watts/Kiawah Island Intercollegiate Oak Point and Cougar Point, Par-72 Second Round Team Scores

- 1 Miami 303-305 605 +29
- 2 East Tennessee 300-306 606 +30
- 3 Central Arkansas 310-300 610 +34
- 4 Mississippi 305-306 611 +35

5 Florida 309-303 612 +36
 6 Central Florida 306-307 613 +37
 7 Kentucky 312-302 614 +38
 T8 Coll. Of Charleston 307-310 617 +41
 T8 Western Carolina 306-311 617 +41
 10 South Florida 314-304 618 +42
 11 Toledo 319-300 619 +43
 T12 Oral Roberts 303-318 621 +45
 12 Oregon 310-311 621 +45
 14 Augusta State 315-307 622 +46
T15 Middle Tennessee 311-312 623 +47
 T15 Nebraska 309-314 623 +47
 17 Illinois State 320-305 625 +49
 T18 Oregon State 319-309 628 +52
 T18 William & Mary 318-310 628 +52
 T18 UNC Wilmington 311-317 628 +52
 T21 Mississippi State 311-319 630 +54
 T21 Elon 328-302 620 +54
 23 Jacksonville State 314-318 632 +56
 24 Texas State 320-313 633 +57
 25 Winthrop 329-309 638 +62
 26 Charleston Southern 322-317 639 +63
 T27 Richmond 330-310 640 +64
 T27 Longwood 316-324 640 +64
 29 Southern Methodist 333-309 642 +66
 30 Ball State 326-321 647 +71
 31 Kennesaw State 331-318 649 +73
 T32 Missouri State 334-318 652 +76
 T32 Maryland 313-339 652 +76
 34 Cincinnati 334-319 653 +77
 35 Bucknell 325-332 657 +81
 36 USC Upstate 334-325 659 +83
 37 Wofford 347-314 661 +85
 38 Bradley 344-319 663 +87
 39 Old Dominion 328-336 664 +88
 40 Southern Illinois 341-326 667 +91
 41 Marshall 339-338 677 +101
 42 Mercer 350-330 680 +104
 43 Citadel 352-354 706 +130

T15 MT Scores (623)

T25 **Leigh Wilkins** 80-73 153 +9
 T39 **Hannah Weathersby** 74-80 154 +10
 T51 **Karisa Akin** 79-76 155 +11
 T110 **Clara Leathers** 78-83 161 +17
 T138 **Mallory Bishop** 82-83 165 +21

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